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J. J. JARVES, Editor.

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COMMUNICATED.

A STORM AT SEA.

By REV. FRED W. TAYLOR, Chaplain, U. S. N.

"I pretend not to be weather-wise, Mr. M." I remarked to the purser, as I stood him on the quarter deck, while our ship was just ready to trip her anchor on the morning of our leaving Tung Koo. "But if all sailor's signs be true, we will have more wind before we have ss."

The John Adams, in a different position, was already under way, being towed through a different pass from ourselves, as her position was more favorable with regard to the tide, which delayed us for an hour and more before we could double the head of Tung Koo island.

It was four bells, or ten o'clock in the morning, as our ship unmoored her last hold on the celestial empire. The sky was deeply blue, and beautiful beyond my morning I had before remarked; and in this field of loveliness, lay the soft and elongated cloud, with its spread train and ethery edge, more enchanting in its pencilled fringe than ever before I had observed that species of those airy coursers, which the seamen call the mare's-tails! They slumbered in their unearthly and sweet rest as they lay, few and at far distances from each other; with the mackerel-backs, in their chequered and broken layers, filling up more closely the higher portions of the blue—deep blue canopy. Few mornings ever broke more fair; few skies ever looked more beautiful, as those clouds in the play of their electric points varied the rich and sunny heavens. One mystic nimbus was alone to be seen amid all this rich beauty, as it wreathed its dark folds around the highest peak of Lintin, an island in the near distance, as if to say, "Skies the lightest, are not always unclouded." The breeze springing as we stood down the roads of Macao, before described, under a gentle press of canvas, unable to take the more north-

ern and eastern pass, and soon after dismissed the pilot, with the hopes and the prospects of gaining, with the increasing wind, a long stretch before night-fall, from this island-bound coast.

All were congratulating themselves and each other on their happy escape from Tung Koo. We had seen enough of the celestials at their homes; and this point seemed now to us the starting place of our return to our own dear land; while every benevolent heart looked forward to our soon gaining a more northern latitude, which, it was hoped and believed would give substance to many of the shadows which were moving, like so many ghosts, over our decks, and add nerve to the decayed energies of the ship's company. Every step now seemed to plant itself more firmly on the deck, and every chest breathed already more freely as the freshening breeze bore on our ships, until, with the sun-set, all apprehensions of a lee shore escaped the visions of the wary sailor.

"Stand by to furl the royals, I say," cried the officer of deck, after the commodore had taken a few rounds on the quarter deck, and scanned the prospects of the weather for the night.

"Haul taught—in royals," was the next order; and a moment had not passed when those far up sails, looking so like the palm of a man's hand, as they are stretched upon the highest spars of the ship, were gathered to the slim and highest yards of the masts.

"We divined not wrongly, purser, as we read that beautiful sky this morning,

'Mackerel backs and mares' tails,
Make high ships carry low sails.'"

The purser and myself, at this pleasant hour, were trespassing with other officers of the wardroom, on the arm chest of the quarter deck, while these orders were being given.

"Man the top-gallant clewlines—lay aloft to furl the top-gallant sail," again cried the officer through his trumpet, as the breeze continued to freshen and the ship, under the impulse of the pressure upon the canvas, now and ever met with a bound that bid defiance to the wave, the cleft surge, which the fresh breeze of the day had begun to conjure up to a greater magnitude each moment we had been deepening our water, in its blue and fathom.

"Haul taught—let go the halliards and lee sheet—clew down; let go the weather sheet—clew up." A moment only passed, and the top-gallant sails of the fore, main, and mizen, lay as snugly to their yards as ever lady plaited surplice over stomacher, or roll on dress.

The ship was deemed snug for the night; and as the hours advanced with the continuance of the fresh and favorable breeze, all, save the watches in their

turn, were lost at the usual time in their hammocks, cot, or bed.

The hour had reached a little past the mid-watch of the night, without awakening the apprehensions of the officers of the deck beyond the attentive marking of the weather; until, a dark squall, as if magic had gained some new powers in rapidity of movement, came down upon the ship, and with its heavy breath shivered to ribbons every remaining sail that was set.

It was a sorry sight, as the day broke, to see the tattered sails, that had been with difficulty, gathered to the yards. The squall had now given place to a steady gale, increasing every hour in its force and fury; and the ship was now laying-to under her fore storm stay-sail and main and mizen trysails. The royal and top gallant yards had been sent down—the top gallant masts housed—the top sail yards, clewed down, and the Columbia, in her storm dress, now abided the war of elements, the torrents of rain, and the hurricane of winds. The rains for a while ceased, while the winds yet drove the sheets of spray in their horizontal layers from the cleft tops of the high waves, through the cordage of the nearly naked ship in volumes as drenching as were the torrents themselves. A new course was bent, while the frigate lay-to like a life-boat on the billow, though the sea had now swollen to the mountain surge. The John Adams, under the same sail, was near, at the windward, apparently with all things snug, like a phantom-craft, and at times under bare poles, as the two ships rose together, or again sunk, so that the trucks of either became for a moment invisible to each ship, and the next, rose with their hulls and every chord distinctly traceable on the wild and dun sky. And then, those winds—those howling winds of the gale, as they murmured with a voice more doleful than could be the chaunt of a thousand spirits of lost mariners engulfed by the raging storm, came through our rigging, with omens of dark things to the ship.

Thus the two coursers stood on their parallel tracks for the day, bounding from surge to surge, or drifting from ravine of water to leeward ravine, while the roll of the sea spread out its giant proportions, now trembling from its height to find its level, as the top broke in its cataract of foam to the deep and blue declivities of the billows, or at times threw its broad sheet in a chrysal river across the bulwarks of our ship.

The wind in its fury fell not as the coming night shut in again upon the dark sea, but its fearful impulses increased as the night watches advanced. The ship was thoroughly soaked by the driving surges which dashed against the Columbia, now penetrating the partial opening of the closed port-holes or coming

from the hatch-ways of the upper deck; and our ward room was afloat from the sea that drove with irresistible force against the storm-posts and penetrated by the rudder coat. And the sick were in their darkness and distress but delaying death. But wet as was the ship and shivered as were her sails, the revelation of the morning had not been anticipated for its fearful apprehension and the critical circumstances in which the gallant bark was to be found. The topgallant masts, notwithstanding they had been housed and the back-stays sheep-shanked and well taught, bent like a withe in the roll of the ship; and the morning discovered, as trifles in these circumstances, that the main top gallant mast had been carried away, together with the main trysail mast; and one of the boats, without having been noticed as it was disengaged by some surge in the loud roar of the winds from the davits, had gone on its wild buffet of the waves. With sea room, the gale might, if it please, blow its worst in typhoon, hurricane and tempest, and we would trust the good Columbia to her stumps, evincing as she did, her staunch qualities, without admitting a drop of water through her lower planks; and bounding and rebounding like some light but solid trunk of a forest mammoth, which the storm for ages might beat uninjured and unyielding, so staunch was she in the tight work of her admirable mechanism. But the rock and the coral reef, and shoal, and sand bar, in unison with the surge of the open ocean, and the wild gale that shows no pity in its madness, would make even a thing so fair and faithful as the ship that had so justly received our confidence and attachment, but a cradle of bulrushes were she once to strike upon them, in the tumult of elements that were now driving above, and raging around, and rolling beneath us. But it was hoped that we had gained an offing the first twenty-four hours, of one hundred and fifty miles, and it must be a fearful drift of tides and drive of winds, that could have borne us in dangerous nearness to the coast. The dark clouds had admitted of no observation, and the log could not give us the tides and the drift. The second morning broke, and the storm had not lowered its voice; and the hurricane in its torrent—tempest, blended its fury with the heaviest roll of the sea, heaving, in its wildest commotion. None but the mariner then, can estimate the development of the day-break as it fell on a changed sea in its color for the deep blue of the fathomless ocean to the pale green of soundings. The lead in its cast gave the shallow water of twenty five fathoms; and in the drift of a few more casts, but twenty two fathoms, still decreasing, while the elements combined their concentrated and unabating furies.

To be continued.